

This is an official

CDC Health Alert

Distributed via Health Alert Network
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Multiple States Investigating a Large Outbreak of E. coli O157:H7 Infections

Public health officials in multiple states, with the assistance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, are investigating a large outbreak of E. coli O157:H7 infections. Thus far, 50 cases with isolates demonstrating pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) CDC PulseNet pattern number EXHX01.0124, as determined by Xba restriction enzyme DNA digestion, have been reported from CT (1), ID (3), IN (4), MI (3), OR (5), NM (2), UT (11), WI (20). Eight patients developed the hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) and one patient died. Most cases are recent: for those with known illness onset, the range of onset is 08/25/2006 to 09/03/2006. The outbreak is likely ongoing.

Preliminary findings from case interviews indicate that pre-packaged spinach is the most likely source. Additional investigation is necessary to determine the brand or brands of pre-packaged spinach involved. State and CDC investigators are working with FDA to quickly gather information to take action to protect the public. The FDA advises that consumers not eat bagged fresh spinach at this time.

The E. coli O157:H7 bacterium causes diarrhea that is often bloody and accompanied by abdominal cramps, but fever is absent or mild. The illness typically resolves within a week. However, some people, especially young children and the elderly, develop the hemolytic uremic syndrome, or HUS.

For more information concerning E. coli O157 infection, please see the CDC internet website: http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/submenu/sub_ecoli.htm.

E. coli O157:H7 cases should be reported rapidly to the appropriate local and state public health officials, and isolates should be forwarded to state public health laboratories for rapid PFGE analysis. We request state officials report cases demonstrating the outbreak PFGE pattern to the Enteric Diseases Epidemiology Branch (Thai-An Nguyen (ten9@cdc.gov, 404-639-0776) ASAP.

DHEC Contact Information for Reportable Diseases and Reporting Requirements

Reporting of cases or possible cases E. coli O157:H7 or patients who develop hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) is consistent with South Carolina Law requiring the reporting of diseases and conditions to your state or local public health department. (State Law # 44-29-10 and Regulation # 61-20) as per the DHEC 2004 List of Reportable Conditions available at: http://www.scdhec.gov/health/disease/docs/reportable_conditions.pdf

Federal HIPAA legislation allows disclosure of protected health information, without consent of the individual, to public health authorities to collect and receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease. (HIPAA 45 CFR §164.512).

Regional Public Health Offices

Mail or call reports to the Epidemiology Office in each Public Health Region.

Region 1

(Anderson, Oconee)

220 McGee Road
Anderson, SC 29625
Phone: (864) 231-1966
Fax: (864) 260-5623
Nights / Weekends: 1-866-298-4442

(Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Saluda)

1736 S. Main Street
Greenwood, SC 29646
Phone: 1-888-218-5475
Fax: (864) 942-3690
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-420-1915

Region 2

(Greenville, Pickens)

PO Box 2507
200 University Ridge
Greenville, SC 29602-2507
Phone: (864) 282-4139
Fax: (864) 282-4373
Nights / Weekends: (864) 460-5355 or
1-800-993-1186

(Cherokee, Spartanburg, Union)

PO Box 4217
151 E. Wood Street
Spartanburg, SC 29305-4217
Phone: (864) 596-2227 ext. 210
Fax: (864) 596-3443
Nights / Weekends: (864) 809-3825 or
1-800-993-1186

Region 3

(Chester, Lancaster, York)

PO Box 817
1833 Pageland Highway
Lancaster, SC 29721
Phone: (803) 286-9948
Fax: (803) 286-5418
Nights / Weekends: 1-866-867-3886 or
1-888-739-0748

(Fairfield, Lexington, Newberry, Richland)

2000 Hampton Street
Columbia, SC 29204
Phone: (803) 576-2749
Fax: (803) 576-2993
Nights / Weekends: (803) 304-4252

Region 4

(Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, Sumter)

PO Box 1628
105 North Magnolia Street
Sumter, SC 29150
Phone: (803) 773-5511
Fax: (803) 773-6366
Nights/Weekends: 1-877-831-4647

(Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marlboro, Marion)

145 E. Cheves Street
Florence, SC 29506
Phone: (843) 661-4830
Fax: (843) 661-4859
Nights / Weekends: (843) 660-8145

Region 5

(Bamberg, Calhoun, Orangeburg)

PO Box 1126
1550 Carolina Avenue
Orangeburg, SC 29116
Phone: (803) 533-7199
Fax: (803) 536-9118
Nights / Weekends: (803) 954-8513

Region 5 (cont)

(Aiken, Allendale, Barnwell)

1680 Richland Avenue, W. Suite 40
Aiken, SC 29801
Phone: (803) 642-1618
Fax: (803) 643-8386
Nights / Weekends: (803) 827-8668 or
1-800-614-1519

Region 6

(Georgetown, Horry, Williamsburg)

2830 Oak Street
Conway, SC 29526-4560
Phone: (843) 365-3126
Fax: (843) 365-3153
Nights / Weekends: (843) 381-6710

Region 7

(Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester)

4050 Bridge View Drive, Suite 600
N. Charleston, SC 29405
Phone: (843) 746-3806
Fax: (843) 746-3851
Nights / Weekends: (843) 219-8470

Region 8

(Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, Jasper)

219 S. Lemacks Street
Walterboro, SC 29488
Phone: (843) 525-7603
Fax: (843) 549-6845
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-614-4698

Bureau of Disease Control

Acute Disease Epidemiology Division

1751 Calhoun Street
Box 101106
Columbia, SC
Phone: (803) 898-0861
Fax: (803) 898-0897
Nights / Weekends: 1-888-847-0902

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.